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DESCHAMPS' "THUIREVAL"

In a ballade of five stanzas and an envoy, Deschamps champions the cause of the Leaf as opposed to the Flower, and in the envoy cites a number of distinguished Frenchmen who hold with the Leaf.

Royne sur fleurs en vertu demourant,
Galoys d'Aunoy, Mornay, Pierre ensemment
De Tremôille, li borgnes Porquerons,
Et d'Araynes Lyonnet vont loant,
Et Thuireval vostre bien qui est grant;
Pour ce a feuille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons.¹

Again, in the envoy of a ballade addressed to the Seneschal d'Eu, the main author of the *Livre des Cent Ballades*, he mentions other French courtiers whom the Seneschal is to consult if he is in doubt as to the answer of the question that has been propounded to him.²

Seneschal d'Eu, mes cuers en vous se fie,
Enquerez bien de ceste maladie
Au Tourangoys, a Le Breth et au fort
Au conte d'Eu, Harecourt, Jehan de Trie,
Et pour estre mieulx la chose fournie,
Demandez ent a l'amoureux Clifford.

These various names are identified by Raynaud in his index to Deschamps,³ and Professor Kittredge in his interesting account of the last-named courtier, Sir Lewis Clifford, has touched upon them.⁴ Neither Raynaud nor Kittredge, however, has been able to identify "Thuireval." Under this name Raynaud has in his index

¹ *Œuvres complètes d'Eustache Deschamps (S. A. T. F.)*, IV, pp. 262-64.

² Lequel vault mieulx a jeune chevalier
Et a homme qui par le monde va,
Belle dame, s'il se veult marier,
Qui jeune soit, ou moyenne qui a
L'aage passé? Et laquelle prendra
Pour le meilleur et pour joieuse vie
Le chevalier?

—*Ibid.*, III, pp. 375, 376.

³ See Vol. X (*S. A. T. F.*), *Index des noms propres et des matières* under the names "Aunoy," "Mornay," "La Trémouille," "Poquières," "Araynes," "Orléans (Louis d')," "Albret (Charles d')," "Artois (Philippe d')," "Harcourt (Jean VI)," "Trie (Jean de)," "Clifford."

⁴ "Chaucer and Some of His Friends," *Modern Philology*, I, 1.

merely "membre de l'Ordre de la *Feuille*," which is nothing more than a repetition of what Deschamps had already said, and Kittredge says, "Thuireval has not been identified."¹

There exists, nevertheless, evidence which seems to show that Thuireval, like Clifford, was an English knight, perhaps a friend of Clifford's; and also, that in at least one instance he may have been connected with Chaucer in a rather remote manner. Chaucer on October 15, 1386, in the refectory of the abbey at Westminster, deposed before John de Derwentwater in the Scrope and Grosvenor controversy that he was "del age de xl ans & plus armeez par xxvij ans,"² thus giving us the main evidence upon which the date of his birth rests. Sir Lewis Clifford was also one of the deponents in the same controversy, and also upon the side of Scrope. His testimony was given four days after Chaucer's (October 19, 1386), in the same place, and before the same commissioner;³ and was preceded by that of John Thirlewalle, who is in all probability the "Thuireval" of Deschamps' ballade. The slight variation in the orthography would not hinder the identification.⁴ His deposition was one of the most interesting of the many that were given in that long trial over the right to the arms azure a bend d'or, and contained several rather remarkable statements concerning the age of his father.⁵

From it we learn that Thirlewalle was the youngest of several brothers; that according to his own statement he was fifty-four years old in October, 1386, and had been armed for thirty-two years and upward, which would place his birth in the years 1331-32 and would make him about twenty-two or younger when he first took up arms.⁶ The usual age at which men were armed in those days was fifteen or sixteen, but it was not unheard of for

¹ *Modern Philology*, I, 5, n. 6.

² Nicolas, *Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy*, I, 178.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 183.

⁴ Cf. the many variants of the name Chaucer (Kern, *The Ancestry of Chaucer*, p. 10) or those of Clanvowe (Kittredge, *Modern Philology*, I, 15, n. 4).

⁵ Nicolas, *Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy*, I, 181; II, 425.

⁶ There have been many wild and whirling guesses made as to the meaning of *armeez* and the value of *plus* in the *Roll* (cf. Schmitz, *Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer Modernized*, London, 1841, p. cxiii; Shaw, *Complete Manual of English Literature*, New York, 1871, p. 37; Thoms, *Notes and Queries*, 4 S., VII, pp. 338, 478), but an examination of their use in the *Roll*, the details of which cannot be given here, proves conclusively that *armeez* refers to the number of years during which the deponent has borne arms. *Plus* was a variable quantity whose exact value cannot be determined; it usually represented a small number.

them to take up arms at the age of twenty-one or thereabouts. Thirlewalle testified that his father, when he died, was "of the age of $\frac{xx}{vij}$ and v," and that it had been "forty and iiij years" since his death; from his testimony we also learn that his father had been armed during sixty-nine years and that he was probably present at the battle of Falkirk in 1298. If these figures be accepted as accurate, the deponent's father must have been seven score and five years old and have died about 1342. There are reasons for doubting the accuracy of the record at this point,¹ but it is practically certain that the elder Thirlewalle attained a very advanced age and was perhaps a centenarian—his son stated him to have been at the time of his death the oldest esquire in the North.

It is evident from his deposition that the deponent had seen much active service in the wars of the period, and since he distinguishes between his direct assertions and what "he had heard," it may be assumed that he himself was in the army before Paris in 1360, at Balyngamhill and Caux in the autumn of 1369 under the duke of Lancaster, and connected with the expedition into Scotland under the king in person, in August, 1385.²

There is, of course, no direct proof that the "Thuireval" of Deschamps' ballade refers to the Thirlewalle who testified in the Scrope and Grosvenor controversy; the probabilities, however, favor such an identification, and it may therefore be worth our while to collect what information we can regarding John Thirlewalle. As the deponent testified that he was from the North he must have been connected in some way with the family of Thirlwallles that were for generations seated at Thirlwall castle in the county of Northumberland.³ The account becomes at times a bit

¹ Besides the inherent improbability that he was 145 years old, it should be noted that if this age be accepted as accurate, then the son was born when the father was about 135 years of age, and the father was over one hundred at the battle of Falkirk, and not armed until late in life. The terms in which the age and other figures are given offer an easy opportunity for making mistakes, and the error was probably made by the scribe who took down the deposition rather than by the deponent. I am reminded of this point by Professor Kittredge, to whom I also owe thanks for many other corrections and suggestions.

² For an account of these expeditions see Mackinnon, *History of Edward the Third*, London, 1900.

³ Professor Kittredge has called my attention to the account of the Thirlwalls contained in Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, Pt. II, Vol. III (1840): Thirlwall township and manor, p. 143; Thirlwall pedigree, pp. 144-46; Thirlwall castle, pp. 147, 148.

confusing owing to the fact that there were three John Thirlwalls—John Thirlwall, Senior, who was the father of John Thirlwall, Junior, who was in turn the father of another John Thirlwall. It will perhaps conduce to clearness if the names are taken up in the order just given.

In October, 1365, as John de Thirlwall, Senior, and then in the King's service, he had letters of protection for himself, men, and servants in Greenhowe and Rileygh, in Lidale (*Rot. Scot.*, I, 896). In 1369 we find him styled lord of the castle and manor of Thirlwall (*Evid.* 8);¹ and in the same year he was in a commission on border matters for the West Marches with his neighbor Thomas de Blenkinsop, the bishop of Carlisle, and others (*Rot. Scot.*, I, 935). In 1377, he was a witness to the Swinburne entail of lands on his son [grand-son] John; and, in 1379, on a commission on matters respecting the Middle Marches (III, ii, 34; *Rot. Scot.*, II, 20).²

In 1369 John Thirlwall, Junior, constituted Philip Thirlwall his special attorney to give livery in his name to John Thirlwall, Senior, lord of the castle and manor of Thirlwall.³ In that same year Thomas de Penreth granted lands in the forest of Inglewood in Northumberland to John Thirlwall and Christiana his wife (Cristina in record).⁴ On February 18, 1379, John de Thirlwall "the younger" of Cumberland, with seven others, was appointed "to array and equip with arms all the men in that county capable of defending it, so as to resist hostile invasion and the destruction of the English tongue."⁵ Among his associates was John Derwentwater before whom the John Thirlewalle of the Scrope and Grosvenor trial testified. On May 13 (3 Ric. II), John de Thirlewalle, Junior, with four others, was commissioned to arrest all who export skins and wool felts from England into

¹ Hodgson, p. 147; Landsd. MS., 1448, fol. 55.

² Hodgson, p. 145.

³ Hodgson, pp. 145, 147.

⁴ Nicolas is wrong in ascribing to him the reference in *Rot. Scot.*, 39 Edw. III., m. 4; this record refers to John Thirlwall, Senior (see above). *Rot. Scot.*, I, 896; *Rot. Orig.*, II, 296; Nicolas, *Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy*, II, 425-26. See also pp. 427-33, where Nicolas has given a sketch of Clifford which may be compared with the fuller account compiled by Professor Kittredge. Richard de Thirlwall, king's yeoman, received a grant referring to the forest of Inglewood, dated at Stirling, June 13, 1337 (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 11 Edw. III, Pt. III, m. 30, 1334-38. p. 460), which he later resigned (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 14 Edw. III, Pt. I, m. 20, 1333-40, p. 453).

⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 2 Ric. II, Pt. II, m. 31 d., 1377-81, p. 359.

Scotland.¹ The connection of John Thirlwall, Junior, with the King's expedition into Scotland is shown by an order, dated July 28, 1385, detailing him and five others to guard the town and castle of Carlisle with ninety men-at-arms and a hundred archers in the absence of John de Nevil, keeper of the town and castle, "whom the King has ordered to accompany him in his present expedition of war against Scotland."² During this war (December 11, 1386) John Thirlewall the younger was granted remission for life of 24s. 6d. of the yearly rent of 64s. 6d. at which he held, by grant of Edward III to him and to Christiana his wife, sixty-four and one-half acres in the royal waste of Inglewood.³ John de Thirlewall the younger was twice appointed (February 20, May 20, 1386) controller of certain repairs to the fortifications of the castle of Carlisle.⁴

John de Thirlwall, Senior, was a son-in-law of Sir William Swinburne, and in 1377 certain estates of the Swinburnes were entailed upon his grandson John de Thirlwall on the condition of his bearing the name and arms of William de Swinburne.⁵ The phrase used in the document is "Johannis filio Johannis de Thirlwall junioris;" among the witnesses, as has been already noted, was "Johanne Thirlewall seniore."

There are in the records of the time other notices referring to John Thirlewall without mention of "Junior" or "Senior." Some-one of that name represented the county of Cumberland in the Parliament that met at Westminster in October, 1386,⁶ and John Thelwall was sheriff of Cumberland county on November 20, 1386.⁷ The form Thelewele appears occasionally as a variant for Thirlewall,⁸ and it may therefore be that we have a reference to Thirlewall's death in the mention on July 1, 1394, of Richard Wynwyk, "executor of the will of John de Thelewall."⁹ The arms of

¹ Hodgson, p. 145; *Rot. Scot.*, 3 Ric. II, m. 3, II, p. 22.

² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 9 Ric. II, Pt. I, m. 39, 1385-89, p. 10.

³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 9 Ric. II, Pt. I, m. 5, 1385-89, p. 71.

⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 9 Ric. II, Pt. II, mm. 21, 31, 385-89, pp. 112, 129,

⁵ Hodgson, Pt. III, Vol. II, p. 34 (1828); Pt. II, Vol. III, p. 145 (1840).

⁶ *Rot. Claus.*, 10 Ric. II, m. 16 d.

⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 10 Ric. II, Pt. I, m. 13, 1385-89, p. 238.

⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Ric. II, 1377-81, General Index under "Thelwall."

⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 18 Ric. II, Pt. II, m. 34, 1391-96, p. 540. The date would accord well with the age given by the deponent in 1386.

Thirlewalle were, Sable, a chevron argent between three boars' heads coupéd Or.¹

Although the identification is by no means certain, it is not improbable that the John Thirlwall referred to in these last records is in some cases, if not in all, John Thirlwall, Junior. It would also seem probable that the John Thirlewalle of the Scrope and Grosvenor controversy was John Thirlwall, Junior, were it not for one point. The deponent testified in 1386 that it had been "forty and iiij years" since his father's death, whereas, as we have seen, the father of John Thirlwall, Junior, was living in 1377. Hodgson regards this evidence as conclusive, but I am inclined to think that the question is still at least doubtful. In the first place, it will be noted that the deponent does not definitely state that his father died in 1342, but says that it has been forty and four years since the death of his father. We have already seen that there must have been a scribal error in this testimony, because the deponent at the same time stated that his father was 145 years old. I think that it is not unlikely that the mistake extends to the "forty and four" as well as to the "seven score and five"—perhaps the first phrase should have been merely "four."

Furthermore, unless the error is regarded as affecting the statements of the deponent as to the death as well as the age of his father, his statements will be inconsistent. He himself was born in 1331-32; his father, though not 145 years old, must still have been an extremely old man, since the deponent specifically stated that his father had borne arms sixty-nine years and was at the time of his death the oldest esquire in the North. If, now, 1342 be regarded as the correct date of his father's death, then the deponent must have been born within ten years of that event—that is to say, probably after the father was over eighty years of age, certainly after he had reached the age of seventy. If the statement that his father had borne arms sixty-nine years be correct, the father must have been at least seventy years old, and probably older, at the birth of his son. Minor points that also make for the identification are the fact that the deponent's father was an esquire, as was also the father of John Thirlwall, Junior,

¹ Vincent's "Northumberland" in the College of Arms.

and the fact that all the probabilities favor such a view; the details given in the deposition fit John Thirlwall, Junior, and there is no other John Thirlwall known to whom they could be ascribed.

But whether this identification be correct or not, we have at least ascertained that the hitherto unidentified "Thuireval" of Deschamps' ballade was almost certainly an English knight named Thirlwall.

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